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A

PARAPHRASE

ON THE

Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Chapters

OF

M A T T H E W,

With PROPER.

S O L I L O Q U I E S

At every PERIOD.

In a LETTER from a FATHER
to a SON.

*And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father,
and serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind;
for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all
imaginings of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be
found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee
off for ever, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.*

L O N D O N,

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MDCCXXXVII.





A

LETTER FROM A Father to a Son.

DEAR SON,

YOU are now, through the goodness of God, come to those years, wherein it is justly expected you should perform the several duties incumbent on you, and fill up your station in life; because it is reasonable and fit, and worthy a rational mind; and not only because you are obliged by those who have the authority over you, and indeed the utmost your dearest friends can now do for you, is to advise and direct you; but the real benefit and advantage you will receive thereby, must wholly depend upon your self.

Yet that I may not be wanting to assist your pious endeavours after a happy immortality, to which I am

obliged by the strongest ties of love and duty; I shall, through the divine assistance, as occasion offers, write to you on such subjects as may instruct your youth, and lead you into the early habits of religion and virtue; that so you may pass calmly and innocently through this state, and having done the will of God here, may be fitted to serve him in an eternal happy duration.

And as, in the first place, his gracious aid and assistance is absolutely necessary both for our preservation and happiness; so I exhort you constantly to implore the aid of his good Spirit, to lead you into all useful truth, and to assist you in the steady and uniform practice of it. To which end, I also address myself to the Father of spirits, the only true God, through our only Mediator Jesus Christ, intreating that he would direct your steps in the paths of righteousness and peace; that he would endue you with a teachable mind and pure heart; that you may possess a meek and peaceable disposition; and that your breast may glow with love and benevolence to all, in patience resigning yourself to his holy will, and obeying his precepts with the greatest alacrity; and that you may be preserved from the defilements of this present evil world: that so having served *our* God with the utmost sincerity, we may have a joyful meeting in the mansions of love and peace, never to part again.

And since serious thought and reflection is the first step by which we are qualified for proper action, and whereby our duty becomes our pleasure; let me therefore both intreat and injoin you, to spend some small part of every day, though it be but half an hour, in retired sober consideration. And whereas our great Lord and Lawgiver Jesus Christ has given us a most full and distinct

distinct body of laws for our rule of action, so I know nothing that can have so powerful a tendency to the perfecting your judgment, and influencing your life, as the meditating on his discourses as given by the Evangelists, which are able to make you wise to salvation; and particularly the 5th, 6th and 7th Chapters of *Matthew*, which contain the best directions that were ever given to the human race; wherein every rule is laid down both for ennobling our minds, and regulating our actions, and the whole inculcated in the most plain and forcible manner: I can therefore propose nothing so proper for your first meditations, as that most excellent and important body of laws, which you will find in that divine discourse.

And since the first beginning of every part of knowledge is attended with some difficulty, I shall, as opportunity offers, send you an easy paraphrase on the text, with such reflections as are adapted to it; which I hope will, by the blessing of God, put you in a method of pursuing it through the other parts of divine writ.

But know, my son, that speculation is not religion, though it is the way to it; for we must first know that God is, *and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him*, before we shall set ourselves to seek him in earnest; yet it is not a clear head, but a good disposition, that recommends us to God, and interests us in his favour. If you hope to be the better for these divine truths, they must enter into your heart, and take possession of it: they must become a vital principle, producing the fruits of holiness, purity and goodness, thro' your whole life.

The great end of these sublime precepts, is to possess the whole man with that wisdom which is from above, pure and peaceable ; to prepare, you through the aid of that kind Spirit, who will ever assist the humble and teachable mind, that you may become a holy temple for God to dwell in, whilst you are raised above all the false amusements of sensitive life : whereby you will enjoy even here an inconceivable felicity, which derives its spring from the God and Father of all, who endures for ever, and therefore shall perpetually increase thro' the ages of eternity.

I shall now begin with the 5th Chapter of St. *Matthew*, but to make the connexion easy, I must a little look back to the foregoing account, contained in the latter part of the 4th Chapter.



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P A R A P H R A S E
O N

The Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Chapters of
M A T T H E W.



C H A P. V.

Jesus having chosen a convenient number of persons, constantly to attend him in his ministry, first travels with them all over Gallilee; openly exhorting the people, to prepare, by repentance, and a holy life, for the reception of the kingdom of heaven, which was at hand (or in other words) of the promised Messiah, the great deliverer who was to come, and whom they so impatiently expected.

And that he might both encourage his disciples, who were to act under him in the publishing this doctrine, and awaken his auditors to a thorough reformation, he performed in every place a great number of kind and beneficent miracles, by a word healing all their distempers wherever he came.

AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain:

I **T**HESSE wonderful performances having drawn a great number of people about him, so that he was pressed by them; which to avoid,

and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.

avoid, and that he might the more conveniently instruct his disciples, whose assistance would now begin to be wanted, he retired to the top of a hill, where the crowd could not incommod him; where having seated himself after the manner of the Jewish doctors when they were about to teach their scholars, and being surrounded by his disciples, and as many others as were disposed to hear him,

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

2 He instructed them in the laws of the Messiah's kingdom, and the necessary disposition of mind requisite for their admission into it.

*The S O L I L O Q U Y, or private reflection,
on the foregoing part.*

Think now, O my soul, with thyself, who this Jesus is, who comes with such authority and goodness to instruct mankind; behold in him that most excellent person, who was the minister of the Father, in making the worlds. This is he who was promised to *Abraham* and the patriarchs, the great deliverer who was to come; that seed of the woman, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, who is declared the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. This is he who conversed with *Abraham* and *Moses*; the angel of the covenant, in whom the name of God was. Behold in him, that beneficent being, who though arrayed with light as a garment, and in the form of God, yet, for the sake of the fallen race of men, condescended to lay aside his glory, and submitted to dwell in a human body, encompassed with all the sinless infirmities of the human make, that he might in himself set us an example of patience, meekness, and resignation to the will of God. And having employed a life of sorrow and reproach, in the most kind and compassionate actions, at length submitted to the most painful death of the cross, that we through him might

might be restored to the favour of God, and obtain eternal felicity.

This is the Lamb of God, who hath overcome the angel of death, opened the prison of departed souls, and by his glorious resurrection demonstrated his dominion over the grave ; who having all power committed into his hands, both in heaven and in earth, and under the earth, is triumphantly ascended to the right-hand of imperial glory and majesty, above the highest heavens ; from whence he will come in the most solemn and august manner to render to myself, and all mankind, according to our works ; either wrath, indignation, and fiery vengeance, which shall devour the wicked ; or a glorious and happy immortality, united with, and joined to, the ever blessed society of the only living and true God, the fountain and origin of all goodness, and of the Lamb, who has loved us, and died for us ; together with the glorious company of angels and archangels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

Listen then, O my soul, to his laws ; be they the rule of thy obedience. Let no dangers affright, no difficulties discourage, nor allurements intice thee ; but, through the aid of his good Spirit, following his example, and continuing patient in well-doing, obtain the prize of eternal life.

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit^{*} : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

3 Blessed are all those who are of a humble and teachable disposition, willing to examine what is offered to them for truth, and are ready cheerfully to receive it on their being convinced of it ; who esteem it beyond

* The phrase (poor in spirit) must here signify a teachable disposition, and the sense determines it. Our Saviour is about to erect a new legislation ; what is the first step to bring men to submit to it, but a docile temper, accompanied with a love to truth ? And it was alone the want of it, that made the Jews reject the Christian institution ; the want of this disposition made the Pharisees say (when our Lord had produced the highest proof of his divine mission) he casts out demons by Beelzebub.

the riches and glory of this world ; and are willing to part with every present enjoyment for its sake. Blessed, I say, are all such as having the proper temper of mind necessary to introduce them into the kingdom of the Messiah here, which will insure to them an eternal and ever blessed establishment in his heavenly kingdom hereafter.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Attend, O my soul, to the voice of thy Lord ; let his words be rooted in thy heart : weigh well the importance of them, and let their beauty and wisdom prevail over thee. Say, what demonstration couldst thou give of thy unfeigned love to thy God, and steady adherence to the Lamb, if any thing can divert thee from attending to his will ? And what proof canst thou produce of thy attachment to truth, and of thy sincere regard for her interest, if transitory views can make thee reject her ? No, if I will be interested in the favour of God, and his Messiah, I must acquaint myself with his laws ; if I hope for a rest in his ever-blessed kingdom, I must suffer no temporal inconvenience to turn me from a steady obedience ?

Is then a teachable temper the first step to my being a Christian ? is this disposition absolutely necessary to procure me the favour of God, and to enter me a disciple of the holy Jesus ? is a sincere love of truth, and a steady adherence to her under every circumstance of life, the only prescribed method for the obtaining eternal felicity ? how diligent should I then be to guard against an immoderate love of the pleasures of this life, or a dread of the evils of it ? how careful to divest myself of all attachment to a party, or regard to the applause of an interest ? and how ought I to confirm myself against the fear of the censures of men, and the cruel reproach of the zealous bigot ?

An impartial examination may cost me the love of my friends, and nearest relations ; it may make me be spoke

spoke of with detestation and abhorrence ; it may throw me from society, and divest me of human conversation ; it may shackle my hands and my feet, and lay me in the lowest dungeon ; the ax and the gibbet may be prepared, and the fire may be kindled to consume me : Yet how dreadful soever the prospect may appear, this is the path prescribed to the heavenly *Ca-naan* ; this is the marked out way to the new *Jerusa-lem* : heaven and immortality close the scene, and the Saviour of the world passed it before me.

Then be not cast down, O my soul, not let the terrors of the world affright thee ; for truth is above all, and greatly to be sought, and eternally happy will be all those who find her.

4 Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

4 Blessed are all they who lament their sins and iniquities ; who from a true sorrow for their past faults, forsake them with detestation and abhorrence. As also are all those who labouring under the evils of this life, patiently submit to the will of God ; and had rather indure their present afflictions, than relieve themselves by any criminal practices. To all such I bring an institution of support and comfort, from the assurance it affords both of the pardon of their sins, and the favour of God here, with their sure admission into the kingdom of glory hereafter.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

How amiable must that institution appear, which makes provision for a whole order of beings, and brings relief to a sinful and afflicted world ? Such is the Christian constitution, in every part suited to our wants, and in a way worthy its divine author. Its contents are no less than the pardon of an offending race, and the restoring of man to his God. And upon how kind and compassionate terms ? only a sincere mourning for

our offences, and forsaking such actions as must necessarily make us miserable ; and at the same time greatly encouraging the patient sufferer to a resolute continuance in well-doing, to hold fast faith and patience under every difficulty of the human life, with a full assurance, that in the closing of the scene, all the pangs of heart, and agonies they have sustained, shall but introduce their greatest good.

Attend then, O my soul, to this most important declaration, and give it its utmost force ; seriously reflect on thy state, and place thy circumstances in the strongest light. Think over the sad effects of deviating from the laws of thy Creator, and violating thy obligations to thy God. Tremble at the destruction before thee ! the eternal ruin to which thou hadst betrayed thyself ! death ready to seize thee ! the pit open to receive thee ! no help ! no intercessor to interpose between thee and offended justice ! when pardon is proclaimed by the Only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth : That most kind and beneficent being, whose bosom glows with all his Father's goodness, hath openly pronounced the sincere mourner for his offences blessed, and proclaimed comfort to the broken spirit, and the contrite heart.

Incouraged then by such a profusion of goodness, take arms against thy iniquities ; let thy transgressions be thy only detestation. They alone can deprive thee of the favour of thy God, and make thee to dread thy appearing before him ; thy lusts only can make thee to fly the presence of thy Lord, from whom all happiness springs, and whose approbation is the creature's supreme good.

Awake then to righteousness, and sin no more ; whilst a genuine sorrow for past transgressions, and a renewed obedience for the time to come, demonstrate the true penitent and sincere Christian,

5 Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.

5 Blessed are all those who are of an inoffensive and harmless disposition ; who by a gentle and mild behaviour, prevent all occasion of animosities and quarrels ; such shall not only

in the general be secured in the quiet possession of what providence has kindly allotted them here, but they shall be admitted into that new earth, which shall take place on the destruction of this present evil world, where love and peace shall inhabit for ever.

SOLILOQUY.

Reflect, O my soul, on this amiable disposition, for which the happy possessor is pronounced blessed by the Son of God himself. What is the temper of mind I am hereby required to cultivate? and what is the practice expected from me, but what directly tends to make me happy both here and hereafter? Where is the man who loves not the meek and quiet mind? Who would hurt the inoffensive man? What wretch so abandoned as to injure another, because he knows he retires from contention, and will not return the injury?

This blessed temper unites mankind in its defence, and gives us all the security of a quiet and calm passage through this troublesome life, as the nature of this state will admit; whilst its happy possessor enjoys a tranquility within, far, far superior to all the pomp and shew of worldly greatness.

Such, O my soul, is the natural tendency of this lovely virtue, as it stands connected with this present state; but the great dispenser of the divine will has enlarged the view, and heightened the glorious scene.

This most excellent person, who has restored life and immortality to man, has opened to us a most durable state, where righteousness and peace shall dwell for ever. This divine ambassador has assured the meek and lowly, a sure habitation, a firm and permanent abode, when this present earth shall be dissolved, and the proud, the insolent, and contentious, shall be utterly consumed.

Incouraged by this delightful prospect, arise to the combat; guard against thy passions, restrain thy desires, root out every turbulent and unruly thought; let anger and

and wrath have no place in thy bosom ; that when that new earth shall appear, wherein nothing that offends shall be permitted to enter, thou mayst have an abundant entrance, and an exalted station, in the Messiah's kingdom of love, righteousness, and peace.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.

6 Blessed are all they who make it their earnest desire and constant care, to lead a strictly religious and just life ; who from a pious sense of their duty to God, perpetually do to all men as they would have others do to them : for all such, by the goodness and favour of God, shall be assisted with sufficient means for the attaining the habits of righteousness here ; and by having those habits perfected, be qualified for the most exalted stations in the other state.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

What is it, O man, thou requirest of thy neighbour ? what are the conditions on which thou desirest the intercourses of social life ? what, but that he should be true to his word, just in his dealings, faithful and honest in all his actions ? These are the bands of society, the foundation of mutual trust and confidence, and the great cement of friendship. Without these, universal dissidence and mistrust will obtain, disorder and confusion take place, and excited by lawless passions and unrestrained desires, the whole human race must become a band of infernals.

Do I stand convinced of these important truths, and shall not a well regulated and just temper of mind be my constant care ? Shall my daily food be more diligently sought, than this disposition be cultivated ? A disposition so reasonable in itself, and for which the Son of God hath pronounced the possessor blessed ; encouraged by the most comfortable promise, that if I will sincerely and carefully seek after it, I shall possess it in the highest degree.

Warmed,

Warmed, O my soul, by so gracious a declaration, awake all thy powers; be superior to any present allurements, and greatly oppose all private views, and partial desires. Let no temptation break in upon thy sincerity, nor lead thee to an unjust action.

Think with thyself, am I a man, and shall I break through all the obligations of humanity? Would I throw off another with contempt and abhorrence for fraud and injustice, and shall I be deceitful and treacherous? Do I believe myself accountable for my actions, and shall I violate the very first law of my make and constitution, which must expose me to the severest punishment? Do I call myself a Christian, and has my Lord and Master placed such a reward before me, and shall I think any diligence too great, for the acquisition of so necessary a virtue? a virtue on which the happiness of the whose rational creation depends. Can I be qualified for an eternal happy duration, unless I am superior to every unrighteous action, and discharge the trust committed to me with unshaken fidelity?

Attend then to thy duty; despise the vain and perishing pleasures of unrighteousness, which will assuredly end in everlasting shame and contempt. But the upright shall be for ever blessed, he shall be crowned in the day of righteous retribution; he shall lift up his head with unspeakable joy, and there shall be none to make him afraid. Pursue then both thy duty and interest; thy duty is pleasant, and thy reward inexpressible. True glory and honour attend thee, a blessed eternity opens before thee, and the blame is only thy own if thou dost not obtain them.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

7 Blessed are they who are of a compassionate and forgiving temper, ready both cheerfully to relieve the necessities of their fellow-creatures, and heartily to forgive the injuries they receive from them. Such a disposition will recommend them to the divine favour, and render them proper subjects of his grace and mercy.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

Think, O my soul, on thy circumstances in life, and the station in which thy maker has placed thee ; and what can appear equally amiable with the precept before thee.

Do I carry a body about me, liable to innumerable evils, from which no affluence of fortune can secure me ? Do I stand in need of various helps and assistances from my fellow-creatures, with whom my very make unites me ? Does the summer's heat and the cold of winter equally affect us ? and are we all alike subject to thirst and hunger, grief and pain, and stand exposed to the same common enemies ? What then can be more beautiful, both in the natural and moral world, than our joint concurrence against the ills of life, mutually assisting one another ?

Do I possess any temporal advantage above another ? what use can I make of it, that will turn so much to my own profit, as the relieving my distressed neighbour ? What selfish gratification can warm my mind, and fill it with that pure and durable pleasure, as to see the dissolving soul flowing in tears of unfeigned joy, from the transported breast of my poor brother, raised by my mite from the depth of sorrow, and the most agonizing woe, to extasy and bliss ? Who can behold the little family round their transported parents, lift up their infant hands to heaven, and call down all the blessings of this promise on their kind benefactor, without injoying that true felicity which takes its rise from heaven ?

How strongly are we called upon by our Judge himself to the performance of this amiable virtue ? and what assurance hath he given us, that the greatest blessings shall attend its practice ? who whilst he obliges us to support the distressed, and comfort the desolate, hath solemnly assured us, that no act of kindness shall lose its reward, and that the cloathing the naked, and feeding the hungry, shall intitle us to that happy sentence, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.*

Do

Do I also find myself a very imperfect and faulty being, subject to great mistakes, and influenced by strong passions, apt to misguide and hurt me; who, after all my care to form my conduct, regulate my affections, and bring my body in subjection, must confess that in many things I daily fail, and fall far short of acting up even to my own better knowledge, and too often offend through folly and rashness against my neighbour?

Shall I then dare to be severe in censuring of others, when I also am guilty myself? Do I expect the kindest allowances to be made for my own faults, and shall I heighten the weaknesses of my brother, of whose temptations or ignorance I am no judge? Certainly our very make forbids it, and humanity itself commands the contrary. And were our views to extend no further, yet our common infirmities point out the forbearance we should exercise to one another.

But the prospect opens; the Saviour of the world has united our future with our present interest: he has assured us, that *as we judge, we shall be judged*; and that *the same measure we mete, shall be measured to us again*: that if we will not forgive our brother his hundred pence, the ten thousand talents that we owe shall not be forgiven; but that if we will remit our brother his few and small offences against ourselves, our very many and great offences against God shall also be remitted.

Say now, O my soul, art thou assured that on thy compliance with this wise command, thy offences shall be forgiven, and thyself secured of the favour of thy God; and wilt thou not call forth all thy powers, that thou mayst be found in the strict performance of this kind injunction?

Shall the only-begotten Son of God, the express image of the one supreme, no way liable to pain or sufferings, shall this most excellent person leave the realms of bliss and glory, and for our sakes dwell in a mortal body, and subject himself to all the sorrows of the human life; and shall I be wanting kindly to assist against the common evils that assault our make?

Shall the Prince of peace, the appointed Judge of all, make all the kind concessions for a faulty world, of

which myself am part ; and shall I dare imperiously to judge my brother, and thereby ascertain my own judgment ?

Guard then, O my soul, against a merciless disposition and a censorious temper, and by the constant practice of charity and forgiveness, acquire those delightful habits, without which thou wilt be for ever excluded the Messiah's kingdom.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.

8 Blessed are all they who are free from all hypocrisy and uncleanness ; and who preserve themselves, body, soul, and spirit, pure and undefiled : to such persons God will most clearly manifest himself in this life, and they shall have a more immediate access to his glorious presence in the other.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

How excellent must be that religion, whose immediate tendency is to spiritualize our natures, and take us off from those sensitive enjoyments which are but of a moment's continuance, and substitute in their room the worthy habits of reason and virtue, which necessarily advance the pure mind to the highest dignity, and fit it for an eternal enjoyment of the God and Father of all, *in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore?*

Such, O my soul, is the Christian religion ; a religion truly spiritual, reaching the hearts and consciences of men ; whose calls are to improve every power of the mind, and to enoble every faculty ; to acquire habits whose native tendency is joy and peace ; and such in particular is the injunction before thee.

What is it, O my soul, thou pantest after ? what dost thou crave as thy chief good ? but that thou mayst be admitted to thy creator's presence, and be approved by the righteous governour of the world.

Behold the wished for path, the way marked out by the great instructor of mankind, the Saviour of the world, sent down from heaven to point out
bliss

bliss and immortality to man ; and what doth our Lord require of us, but that we greatly exert our powers, examine faithfully, and judge impartially, that we may be freed from the merciless tyranny of craving appetites and lawless passions, be delivered from every false bias, that turns us from our duty and true interest ; that we should attain to a pure and intellectual life, unblemished in thought, and blameless in action, clear from every stain of baseness and deceit, and preserved unspotted from the world and all its lusts ; whereby we are rescued from the deepest slavery, and raised to the highest freedom ? The most worthy pursuit of the rational mind, and what every wise and permanent being must press after.

By this disposition the whole man is prepared to act in concert with the holy and pure governour of the universe, to attend his commands, and perform them with the greatest alacrity. It is perpetually to rise in knowledge, holiness, and the favour of God, through the ages of eternity.

How admirable is this character ? how desirable the reward ? greatly then oppose the animal life, and all its delusive charms. Tell it thou hast a happiness in view parmanent as its giver ; the earth may be dissolved, and the heavens run down a liquid fire, but no change shall shock the uninterrupted felicity of the pure and unspotted mind. Arise then to the combat ; ingage all thy powers in this glorious warfare ; heaven it self is ready to support thee, and the fruition of thy God will be thy reward for ever.

9 Blessed are the peace-makers : for they shall be called the children of God.

9 Blessed are they who are of a kind and friendly disposition ; who use their utmost endeavours to preserve mankind in peace and amity ; and when any differences do arise, employ all their power to compose them : These shall be honoured with the distinguishing character of the children of God ; as having that temper of mind that renders them most like to him, and more immediately fit

fits them for the glory and happiness
of the heavenly state.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

How beautiful is the peace-maker? and how amiable the man who reconciles his neighbour? But who is my neighbour? who, but every individual of the human race, to whom I stand related as a man; a tie by which I owe him all the assistance myself could wish for, were our stations changed. And to what am I obliged by this injunction, but to view mankind with love and goodness, to veil and pity all their various failings; to check the very first appearance of anger in the mind; to root out enmity, and extinguish malice; to reconcile my neighbours, and form their minds to love and kindness; to calm the disordered soul, restore its peace, and give tranquillity to the breasts of men.

This is a disposition that rewards itself; it gives the man that solid joy, and makes him to possess that true and durably felicity, of which no outward evil can deprive him. A temper, that whilst it promotes another's good, trebles the blessing on itself.

Such are its genuine fruits, and what arise from its very nature. But christianity heightens the view, and makes the scene more glorious.

Good-will to men, was the angelick song that introduced the Saviour of the world.

Good-will to men, is the kind injunction of the Prince of peace to his disciples here.

Good-will to men, is the breathing of the Christian constitution, and the great foundation of our future happiness; which takes its rise from the God and Father of all, the source and fountain of all that's good. Him we follow, him we imitate, whilst we are promoting the peace and concord of all about us: by this we become the disciples of Christ, and followers of the Lamb, and are intitled to the glorious character of being the Sons of God.

Say now, O my soul, what influence has this most gracious declaration on thee? and how art thou affected by it? Shall hatred or malice govern in thy bosom?

or

or shall anger, wrath or peevishness, bear rule within thee? No! thou blessed disposition of love and goodness, I embrace thee; thou triumph'st in my breast, thou most amiable virtue; my heart is open to receive thee, whilst every opposite thought is banished for thy admission: Henceforth love to my neighbour, and good-will to men, shall be the governing principle of my future actions.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven:

for

10 Blessed are all they who suffer, from the wickedness of men, the greatest indignities and evils of human life, for the sake of a good conscience, and the favour of God: for all such having given the greatest proof of their sincere love and reverence of God, and of their submission and obedience to him, they shall receive a more extraordinary reward in the kingdom of heaven.

11 And of this eminent glory and dignity which shall attend the patient sufferer for well-doing, I take this opportunity to inform you, my disciples, whom I have chosen to act more immediately under me, in spreading my doctrine in the world; who therefore must expect the very worst treatment from the rage and malice of wicked men, who will stick at no injustice to abuse and injure you, for opposing their lusts and carnal interests, against which my doctrines are directly levelled: To you therefore, in a particular manner, I say, for your encouragement, when men shall thus unjustly and cruelly treat you,

12 Triumph with joy unspeakable, and let your minds exult in transport, from the view of that inexpressible glory and dignity, to which you

for so persecuted
they the prophets
which were before
you.

you shall be advanced, for your fidelity, in the kingdom of heaven. Nor yet think, that this treatment is peculiar to you as my disciples; for all the kind instructors of mankind, particularly those who have been sent to the *Jewish* nation, have met with the same treatment, with whom if you persevere, you also shall be rewarded; as shall all other pious and virtuous men, who esteem truth and the favour of God more than they fear the wrath and malice of the wicked and ungodly.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Think, O my soul, what thou art doing, and what obligations thou art laying on thyself, when thou publickly declarest thyself a Christian; reflect on the station thou art in, and what thou must expect to suffer. Weigh well with thyself the importance of thy undertaking, and the trials it will expose thee to, whilst thou embracest a doctrine that thwarts the passions and lusts of men.

But also consider with thyself; is a life of ease and softness to be preferred to the satisfaction of a good conscience? or the gratification of a sensual lust or pleasure, to the approbation of thy God? Is the wrath of man more dreadful to thee, than the displeasure of thy creator? or is the censure of a mortal more to be avoided, than that fearful sentence of *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire?* and canst thou give up all thy hope of an eternal and blessed inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for the base fear of the momentary terrors of vain man, whose life perishes with his breath.

Think with thyself whose approbation thou seekest? whose favour thou desirest above all? whose, but his who is the God of the whole universe, thy creator and governour, and from whom all the good we enjoy springs; whose injunctions we are obliged to obey; who has by the strongest ties the greatest right to our submission.

submission and obedience ; who requires truth and sincerity of his intelligent creatures, and will in no case acquit the hypocrite ; and who tries us here, but to raise us to celestial glory hereafter.

If, then, this is but a probational state, short and imperfect ; if we are placed here only for the trial of our obedience, and to that end, surrounded with innumerable difficulties ; if it is another state that is to be the durable and happy state of the human race ; and yet, to which none shall be admitted but such who (notwithstanding all the opposition of wicked and ungodly men) have greatly professed the truth, acquired the necessary habits of sincerity, and have joined to an honest heart an upright conversation ; how resolutely then should we press on in this glorious trial ? and how contemptible should all these temporary inconveniences appear, since the glory of the heavenly state is laid open to us ? And was the discovery to close here, who could in the least hesitate where to fix his choice ?

But the kind instructor of the human race has heightened the glory with our duty : when he calls us to sufferings, he enlarges the reward ; and truth itself has assured us, that our suffering for righteousness sake, calls for the utmost triumphs of joy and exultation, as being the sure way to the highest glory and dignity.

Avow then, O my soul, the cause of truth and righteousness in the world ; repine not at the evils thou mayst be exposed to for their sakes ; always remember, it is a state of war and striving that thou art engaged in, but glorious is the cause, and most excellent thy companions : The prophets and apostles are gone before thee, and the only-begotten Son of God is at thy head, who in himself has set us the most exalted example ; who being made perfect through sufferings, and having by his blood made atonement for our sins, is declared Lord of all.

Clearfuley then take up thy cross, and follow thy Lord and Master ; be equally superior to the terrors and allurements of life ; fix thy thoughts on that glorious assembly who have already performed the race, and have overcome, and are set down rejoicing in thy steady and unshaken behaviour. Lift but up thine eyes, and behold

hold a crown of glory is prepared for thee, if thou dost not retreat: Press but on, thou art sure of victory.

Be not then discouraged at the difficulty: if great is thy conflict, great also is thy support. The blessed inhabitants above applaud thee, the Holy Spirit assists thee, thy God approves thee, and an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour will be the blessed end of all thy sufferings.

13. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his favour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be troden under foot of men.

13 And that you may be fully apprized of the characters you are to sustain, know that I have called you to be the guides and instructors of mankind, both to form their minds, and direct their actions. And as the salt of the earth is necessary to preserve the material world from corrupting; so are your instructions for the rectifying the moral world. But if salt, which is so useful and necessary for the seasoning of all other things, once loses its own saltiness, it is impossible to restore its favour again, and it becomes good for nothing but to be thrown away as unserviceable and useless: so, in like manner, you who are designed to be the restorers of mankind, ought to take the greatest care of your lives and conversation, lest you fall into vice and folly; since your state will be so much the more deplorable, as there will be none to restore you; but as the vilest of men, you will be rejected with the utmost contempt and abhorrence.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill, cannot be hid.

51 Nei-

14 15 and 16 And that I may excite you to great diligence in the discharge of your office, reflect with yourselves, that you do not light a candle to put in an obscure hole,

where

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel: but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

where it cannot be seen; but you set it in the most advantageous place, that it may give its light in the best manner to all who are about it. To the same end have I called you, and placed you in a conspicuous light to the world, by endowing you with extraordinary powers, that you should be spiritual lights, to enlighten mankind, that they may turn from ignorance and vice, to truth and virtue: And as this employment will make you as remarkable as a city that is built on a hill, so that all who pass by must behold it; so let your lives and actions be distinguishingly exemplary, that men may cheerfully acknowledge your divine mission, and glorify the God of heaven, by submitting to my institution, and practising its precepts.

19 Nor let any man be so foolish as to think, that by becoming my disciple, he will be any way released from a strict obedience to the laws of nature, revived by *Moses* and enforced by the prophets; for my coming as a lawgiver is so far from being with a design to weaken natural religion, or the moral obligations of mankind, that I am come to fulfil all that remains of typical and positive rites, which is not yet accomplished.

20 And whereas there was no part of the ceremonial law, but what was given for wise reasons, and you may assure yourselves, is, or shall be in every minute circumstance strictly fulfilled; so every part of natural religion shall continue in its utmost force, as long as the world itself shall endure.

D

21 And

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

19 And whosoever shall deliberately and presumptuously break any of these moral precepts, which are of perpetual force throughout all ages, and shall either teach or encourage others, by example or precept, to practise the same disobedience, he shall thereby forfeit the character of a Christian, and lose his part in the Messiah's kingdom : but the man who joins with his belief of my being the Messiah, the steady practice of the laws of morality, and exhorts others to the like obedience, he shall be publickly owned as my disciple, and I will raise him to an exalted station in my kingdom.

20 Therefore flatter not yourselves, as though you were intitled to the favour of God, by owning my mission, without obeying my laws, as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* do, who call themselves after *Moses*, and in words own him for their lawgiver ; yet neglecting the moral law, place their religion in external observances : for except you exceed them in the practice of all moral righteousness, ye shall not be admitted into the heavenly state, but shall be intirely excluded from the kingdom of God and his Messiah.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

Reflect, O my soul, on the station thou art placed in, and the obligations that arise from thy circumstances in life.

If thou art set in a publick light, know the eyes of mankind are upon thee. The good regard thee, both to rejoice in thy virtue, and to follow so excellent a pattern ; the bad, to glory in thy failings, and to support themselves in their vices by thy example. Think

Think then what must be the consequence of thy conduct, and what an influence it will have on all about thee? Think what an exceeding weight of glory is prepared for thee, if by a holy life, a cheerful and patient continuance in well-doing, thou excitest mankind to the steady practice of religion and virtue; but how dreadful must be thy account, and what punishment is prepared for thee, if thou abusest thy calling, and becomest an example of unrighteousness! What canst thou expect, but that terrible sentence shall be passed upon thee, which was once pronounced against the worst of men, *It were better for this man he had never been born?*

But if a private station is assigned thee, weigh well with thyself the excellency of those precepts which must endure for ever; how important must those obligations be that can never cease? Labour to know and digest them, search for them as for hid treasure, as the true and durable riches which will never fail.

Think wherein that religion which will be approved consists, not in modes or forms; not in slavishly following a party, or zealously supporting an interest; but in an intire resignation to thy God, in obeying his laws, and hating iniquity; in imitating the best and most beneficent Being in a steady love to truth, and in the constant practice of universal goodness. Tremble therefore at the thoughts, and guard well against being seduced by external shew, or subverted by the craft or applause of man. For know, O my soul, that except thy righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* (those strict observers of the ceremonial law) thou shalt have no interest in God's Messiah.

Reflect also with the greatest admiration and deepest humility, on this glorious dispensation before thee; a dispensation which so beautifully exhibits life and immortality to thy view, and the strong obligations it has laid thee under. Has that divine person, by whom the ages were established, and through whom the worlds were formed; has he left that glory which he possest from the beginning, and in a mortal body submitted to all the innocent infirmities of the human life, that he might exhibit in the most clear and strongest manner

The laws of his God and Father, and in himself set us a most perfect example of obedience; and shall I not follow the Lamb wherever he shall lead me, and trace so excellent a pattern, marked out for my imitation?

Apply thyself then to his laws, employ all thy powers to understand them, that being deeply imprest by the obligations thou art under, thou mayst be found in the universal and constant practice of all his wise and kind injunctions: that so being perfected in all thy habits of religion and virtue, thou mayst be prepared to meet thy Lord, at whatsoever hour of the watch he shall come, and with him have an abundant entrance administered to thee, into the ever-blessed mansions of love and peace, which he is gone before to prepare for all those who love him, and keep his commandments.

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment.

22 But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the councel: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be

21 My coming then is so far from having the least tendency to indulge my followers in any liberties from which they were restrained by the moral law; that I am come, not only to confirm and strengthen it in all its parts, but in many things to heighten and enlarge it: For instance, the law of *Moses* only forbade murder, and annexed death as the penalty for killing of a man;

22 But I command you to restrain the very first rise of anger and wrath in the mind; for I assure you, that whoever indulges a rash and passionate disposition, which makes him angry and wrathful without occasion, he, I say, shall be liable to the just anger and displeasure of God, proportionably to the offence of murder, which you punish with death. And he who allows himself in yet greater liberties, and shall proceed publickly to mock at, and reproach his neighbour,

be in danger of hell-fire.

bour, shall have his punishment heightened in proportion to that greater punishment which the *Jewish* council inflicts on more flagrant offenders: But the man who gives a lose to all his passions, and shall dare outrageously to revile and slander his brother, and censure him as a child of hell and damnation, shall be punished by God with the utmost severity, in a hell of fire, answerable to that most terrible punishment which you practise on the greatest offenders, of burning alive.

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembrest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him: lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt

23 Therefore when you are about to offer up your prayers to God, consider carefully with yourselves, whether in any such instances you have injured your brother, and thereby provoked the anger of God against you:

24 And if you have, first seek your brother, confess your fault, obtain his pardon, and be reconciled to him, and then offer up your prayers to God; and God, who sees your sincere penitency, will forgive and accept you.

25, 26 And this conduct is no more than what the common affairs of life require: for if you have a contest with another, a prudent submission will easily at first put an end to it, whilst it is only between yourselves; but when once you have put it out of your own hands, and the magistrate has taken cognizance of it, there remains nothing but the fearful expectation of the publick sentence, and all hope of accommodation is intirely past. So, under my institution,

shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

institution, you may in this life, by repentance and amendment, prevent all the bad effects of your past faults ; but if you delay till death and judgment overtake you, the sentence must pass, and inexpressible torments will be your portion hereafter,

S O L I L O Q U Y .

What, O my soul, is the injunction before thee, but to promote peace and order, and to establish with thy own a universal good ? What, but to preserve thyself from the worst of tyrannies (*to wit*) that of the furious and angry passions ; to bridle the source of displeasure in the mind, and check the very first motions of hatred and revenge ; to raise in us the most intense degree of love, benevolence and forgiveness, whereby we become qualified for the heavenly society, and are made partakers of even a divine nature.

By anger and revenge I lose my temper, provoke an enemy, and perpetuate the injury ; by forgiveness I at least blunt his malice, if I don't gain a friend. By acknowledging a fault, and making suitable reparation, I restore the order and harmony of the moral and intelligent world, which I had broken ; by defending my trespasses, I encrease the disorder, and declare for ruin : nor can any thing make me more cautious how I offend, than the sense of the obligation I am under to make reparation as soon as I can.

What is it then my Lord and Master requires of me ? but to act as a wise, a free, and accountable being ; that I may be fitted for a blessed life in the celestial mansions, under the immediate government of the only true God ; there to be employed by him in the most delightful manner, through the ages of eternity.

This is to make us free indeed, to rescue us from the most dreadful slavery of malice and revenge, and all their dreadful consequences ; passions that tear the soul to pieces, and unqualify us for social life ; passions that premeditate mischief, and make evil their chief end. O state of dæmons, implacable and cruel ! a perpetual circulation

circulation of confusion and disorder, less pernicious in its consequences to another, than myself; who whilst I am hurting my neighbour, am drawing a far greater evil on my own head, which, if pursued, must end in universal ruin.

Reflect then on thy happiness, in having thy lot cast under the gospel of peace; that thou art placed where the most kind and extensively beneficent laws of our King Messiah are exhibited in the strongest light, what thankfulness should it excite in my breast? what diligence to fix them in my heart? what attention should I always afford them, that I may chearfully practise them in every occurrence of life, and have my mind perpetually inflamed with their eternal beauty and divine excellency?

27 Ye have heard
that it was said by
them of old time,
Thou shalt not
commit adultery.

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and

27 But further, the law says,
thou shalt not commit adultery.

28 But, I say unto you, whosoever looketh on a married woman with impure desires and intentions, is chargeable with the crime of adultery, and will be punished accordingly.

29, 30 Therefore how difficult soever the practice of these refined and spiritual precepts may seem, and how strong soever the opposite passions and appetites may be grown through custom and habit, so that the parting with them may be as hard as the cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye; yet, if they are the occasion of sin, it is much more eligible to part with them, and endure the present uneasiness, than, by gratifying your unreasonable

and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

sonable desires, deprive yourselves of the favour of God, and be condemned to everlasting misery.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

O crime not to be named without the deepest horror and detestation ! O vice, hard to be forgiven, base and treacherous, destructive of society, and the ruin of a world !

Righteous and just, O Prince of peace, is thy decree, the beauty heightens in the strictness of the law ; with great wisdom and goodness hast thou guarded against the first approaches to it.

Bow then, O my soul, before the Lord with the deepest humility, and tremble before him : Treasure up his prohibition in thy heart, that the glare of beauty may never deceive thee, nor the least impurity lead thee aside. Think of the divine goodness that has so kindly checked the very first step to the most detestable transgressions ; the fountain of all confusion and disorder in the world. Dare not for thy life to indulge one idle thought, nor, as thou desirest thy eternal peace and felicity, suffer one irregular desire to possess thy bosom, for thou knowest not where it may lead thee. Better that a mill-stone were tied about thy neck, and thyself thrown into the sea, than that such a band of dæmons should be let loose in thy breast ; a legion of lawless wishes not to be appeased, furious as hell, and more devouring than the grave.

Think, O my soul, no difficulty too great to avoid such a state of confusion, nor any diligence too much to secure thy purity ; let both the punishment terrify, and the reward excite to a steady obedience. In this holy warfare resolutely cut off the right-hand of thy lusts, and pluck out the right-eye of sensual desires. Prostrate thyself before thy God, in a deep sense of thy own

own weakness; implore the constant interposition of divine aid and assistance; that the God of purity would deliver thy whole man, and preserve both body, soul and spirit, pure and holy to the coming of our Lord.

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce.

32 But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, laying for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

31 Again the law allowed the man in certain cases to give a bill of divorce to his wife (*Deut. xxiv. 1.*) whereby the marriage-relation was disannulled, and the woman at liberty to marry again, as though the former contract had never been made.

32 But, I say unto you, henceforth it shall not be lawful for any man to put away his wife, unless she has been guilty of fornication; and whosoever shall put away his wife for any thing that was disagreeable before marriage, except for the violating her virginity, shall be chargeable both with the guilt of the adultery which the woman commits in her marrying another man, and which that man commits in marrying the woman so put away. And this precept is no more than the restoring the primitive institution of marriage, and bringing it back to its first design; the *Mosaic* grant being only a temporary indulgence, which your perverse and wicked tempers made necessary, to prevent greater mischiefs.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

Here, O my soul, thou hast nothing to do, but to set down and adore that wisdom and goodness which have delivered thee from the temptations that arise from frequent divorces among the sons of men.

By this wise and kind injunction the peace and harmony of the marriage-state is secured, the boundless

rovings of ungoverned desires prevented, and the fatal effects of wrath and anger restrained and limited.

Thou hast dried up the abandoned woman's tears, and hushed the cries of the helpless infant, torn from the embraces of the slighted mother, who, lost, forsaken, friendless, is left disconsolate to solitary grief and lasting woe.

O heart-breaking state! O cruelty, too barbarous for the human make, to tear the woman from the once indear-ing husband, and tender mother from her child!

O kind restorer of the original marriage-law, what grateful thanks are due to thee, from all the wise and good; who, detesting the dreadful ruin licentious lust hath made, rejoice in the delightful path of true felicity, and lasting love, guarded by holy, just, benevolent laws; by which the mind is kept in proper bounds, and saved from the first source of unrestrained defiles?

Then stop a while, my soul, and view, with wonder and delight, wisdom and goodness joined in one; behold with transport our present bliss and future happiness, the constant spring of all the wise injunctions of our king Messiah.

And whilst thou art fixed in contemplation on the perfect beauty of the marriage-state, the fitness that the union by which this earth is peopled, should be inviolable; and that nothing should separate the dear united pair, whose mutual endeavours are so necessary to form the tender mind, and raise a future race to virtue: bow and adore before the Prince of peace, by whom it stands secured from foul invasion, and everlasting blot.

And whilst thou ownest the wisdom, goodness, and beauty of his laws, promote their influence in the world around thee.

33 Again, ye
have heard that it
hath been said by
them of old time,
'Thou shalt not
forswear thyself,
but

33 To proceed, the law only prohibits all perjury and false swearing among men, and requires an exact and religious performance of the obligations they had laid themselves under by their oaths; and therefore to

but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is Gods throne:

35 Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay:

to be performed as though God was visibly present to punish their breach of them.

34 But I command you utterly to abstain from swearing in your ordinary discourse, as is the too constant practice of the *Jewish* nation, whereby that most solemn action, for the putting an end to contention, loses its due force and reverence. Neither flatter yourselves that you lessen the crime in swearing by inferior and created things, for this is indeed swearing by the creator and maker of them; therefore you shall not swear by heaven, for that is swearing by the God of heaven, whose throne it is.

35 Neither shall thou swear by the earth, for that is swearing by God, whose footstool the earth is; neither by *Jerusalem*, for God has honoured that city, by becoming its immediate lawgiver and governour, and therefore is an appeal to God himself.

36 Neither shall you swear by things of lesser importance, which still is an appeal to God as the maker of them. For instance, your swearing by your head, is swearing by God who formed it, nay your very hair was made by him, who bestowed its colour upon it. Neither can you make it white before its time, nor when whitened by age, can you restore its * blackness again.

37 Therefore under my institution, the most plain and simple conversation is required, consisting only

* The hair of all the Eastern people is black.

nay: for whosoever is more then these, cometh of evil.

of bare affirmations or denials; which are all that are necessary to be used by a just and righteous man, who will always be believed without more solemn asseverations, which proceed only from a foolish habit, and a rash and wicked temper of mind.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

What, O my soul, is the primary law of thy make? and what does even natural religion require of thee? What, but that as I receive my being and every blessing from my most kind and bountiful creator; so I should possess my breast with the highest reverence and regard for him, and so think of him, as to be always influenced by his authority in the strongest manner?

Can I then name that most excellent being, in a light and trifling way, who holds the universe in his hands, and on whom the existence of all things depends?

Shall I dare irreverently to call upon him, who can raise me to the highest dignity and happiness, or sink me to the vilest condition, and punish me with the severest torments?

Shall I insolently call the supreme Lord of all to witness to my follies, and make his holy and tremendous name bear a part in all my loose and foolish amusements? What is this, but to debase his glory, to treat him as we durst not treat our earthly governour, or even one subordinate to him?

Shall an *Eastern* monarch think death too slight a punishment for using his name to support a falsehood? and what aggravated punishment must I deserve, if I dare either impiously to appeal to him in attestation of a falsity, or neglect to perform the action to which I have obliged myself by his most holy and reverend name?

If then our regard to an oath is of so great importance; if never to be used, but for the peace and tranquillity of society, and to put an end to strife; if the reverence that is due to it suffers, and is destroyed by loose and profane swearing, and a state of confusion and disorder

disorder is introduced by it; what acknowledgments are due to our kind instructor, who by so salutary and well-guarded a law, has obliged against the first step that might lead us either to the contempt of an oath, or an irreverent use of it? But further,

How clearly has our Lord exhibited to our view the whole creation as proceeding from God, and belonging to him? and therefore no appeals are to be made to any part of it, in a slight and indecent manner, as bearing in it a contempt of him who made it.

How wonderfully has our wise lawgiver preserved us from the danger that always attends the common swearer? not only of impiously tearing as it were to pieces the sacred and reverend name of the Most High; but also of falling into numberless surprises of false swearing, which is *a word cloathed with death*, and which, O my soul, would but too soon betray thee into the most deliberate perjury, and must end in thy eternal ruin?

How beautifully has our King and Head prescribed to us the amiable conversation, which is calm, open and innocent (free from every boisterous passion that clouds the mind, and insults the hearer) a conversation that carries conviction in its delivery, and gives a grace to the speaker?

Attend then, O my soul, to this law; let thy words be conducted by sobriety and righteousness; let modesty and truth preside over thy conversation; that the hearer may give credit to thy speech, and that the words of thy mouth may have access to his heart: then shalt thou rejoice in the day of visitation, and shall eat of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right

38 Again, the judicial law allows of retaliation, and permits the return of injury or damage in kind.

39 But under my dispensation this practice shall not be tolerated; neither shall ye oppose violence with violence: and this command I lay upon all my followers, that if they cannot

right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

cannot redress their injuries in a peaceable manner, they not only patiently bear them, but that they venture the repetition of them, rather than relieve themselves by revenge.

40 Nay further, if any man will, under the pretence of publick justice, attempt to deprive you of what you have an uncontestable right to; if it is a matter of no great importance, rather sustain the damage, than by ingaging in a vexatious affair, hurt that disposition without which you cannot be my disciples.

41 And lastly, if the officers of the government will oblige you to unreasonable service, in your attendance on the publick; rather do twice the duty exacted of you, than by refusing, involve yourselves in strife and contention; which will always indanger your innocence, by ingaging your passions, and so unfit you for the practice of the Christian duties; Therefore, though their demands be unreasonable and unjust, yet comply with them, if they are not of great importance, rather than suffer your peace of mind to be injured, or your temper discomposed.

42 Much less shall you be backward in supporting your neighbour, either by chearfully giving or lending him such assistance as his wants and necessities may require.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

Reflect, O my soul, with the greatest attention on the injunction before thee, that being convinced of its reasonableness and beauty, thou mayst obey it with the greatest

greatest alacrity. A law, which however rigid it may at first appear, yet has a direct tendency to raise us to the highest perfection of which our natures are capable, and fit us (under every possible state of existence) for the service of the Lord of the univerſe through the ages of eternity, in every noble and excellent employment.

To this end, seriously consider with thyſelf what thy Lord and Master hath called thee to, and designs thee for? He came to take us out of this present evil world, to perfect us by patience, to raise us ſuperior to either the good or evil of this life, and to conduct us to eternal glory in a ſtate of uninterrupted peace and love.

Say then, if little provocations ruffle me, can I be qualified for a ſtate of unmoleſted peace and tranquillity, not to be disturbed by rashneſs and reſentment? Can love ſubſift in a ſociety that can't bear the leaſt contradiction? Shall I not too ſoon be guilty of acts of injuſtice, if I am inflamed with every little offence? And ſhall I not in a very little time be under the governement of humour or paſſion, ſo that every thing I ſhall happen to diſlike, shall become an unpardonable crime? Will not this procedure intirely diſsolve that only bond of unity, which conſists of love and goodness; and thereby intirely unfit me for an eternally bleſſed and ſocial ſtate.

Does then my happiness, as a ſocial being, conſist in the governing my paſſions, in quelling reſentment, and bearing with little insults and injuries, rather than diſturb the community, or diſcompose my own temper? Could a more imperfect diſpenſation diſcover, that it is more gloriouſ to conquer my own ſpirit, than to take a city? And am I thereby prepared to be what the governoūr of the world would have me to be; and do what the Lord of all would have me to do? And ſhall it not be the buſineſs of my life to attain to it?

Think, O my foul, on the gloriouſ example thy Lord has ſet thee! Has the Prince of peace performed the kindeſt offices of love, in return for the ſcorn and reproaches of men? Has he employed the power of heaven for their good, in return for the baſeſt ingratitude and feareſt injuries? and were his laſt groans on the croiſ,

cross, for mercy for his persecutors and murderers ; and shalt thou think much of passing by the little slights and affronts of men like thyself, and to whom perhaps in some instances thou hast been more faulty than they ?

Bow then before thy Lord and King ; praise and extol thy beneficent lawgiver, who has obliged thee by so worthy a law, so conducive to thy everlasting felicity. Employ all thy powers to acquire the habits of patience and forbearance, that yielding a cheerful obedience to this divine precept, thou mayst be prepared for an eternal happy existence, and mayst not be hurt by the second death.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy :

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you :

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to

43 Lastly, you have been taught that though you were commanded to love your neighbour, yet you were permitted to hate and seek the hurt of your enemy.

44 But I command all my disciples, that ye cultivate such a temper of love and goodness, as to be always kindly-affected to your very enemies ; and that you discover this disposition both by speaking all the good you are able, even of those who revile and curse you, and by performing all the kind offices of life to those who hate you, and take every occasion to injure you. And lastly, when their implacable temper proceeds to such a height, as to return for all your goodness, the utmost virulence of malice, even to the seeking of your lives ; even than pray for them, that they may repent, and be forgiven.

45 And by the constant practice of these precepts, raise yourselves to such an eminent degree of goodness, as to be ready on all occasions to perform every act of kindness and benevolence, without

to rise on the evil
and on the good,
and sendeth rain on
the just and on the
unjust.

without repining ; and thereby approve yourselves the true children of the Lord of the universe, who continues the comforts and blessings of this life to the ungrateful and wicked, in common with the good and virtuous.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the same ?

46 This procedure is necessary for your acquiring the heavenly kingdom ; for if your love and affection is limited to your friends and associates, you do no more than what is practised by the very publicans, whom you esteem the very worst of men.

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do you more than others ? do not even the publicans so ?

47 Nay, though you proceed to express the greatest affection for those of your own sect or party ; yet if you stop here, the very publicans come up to you, who love and delight in those who agree with them.

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

48 But do you set the divine being for your example ; and by doing all the good in your power, imitate the preserver of the world, in the most amiable of his perfections.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Observe, O my soul, with the deepest attention, the great wisdom and goodness with which thy Lord and Master leads thee through the several duties of the Christian life ; and how amiably he prepares the way for thy easy reception of them.

When he has raised thee above resentment for little injuries, and taught thee to be calm under slight provocations, he then proceeds to guide thee to perfection, and sets the example of the supreme Lord, the origin of all being, for thy pattern, for imitation. He places in the strongest light the God of all created nature, with whom is all power, and to whom none can say, why dost thou so ; as exercising in the most extensive man-

ner his bounty and goodness to even his ungrateful and obstinately offending creatures.

O love immense ! O goodness beyond conception ! Thou spring of mercy, from whence all compassion flows ! who not only bears with the disobedient and faulty, but loads them with benefits, to awake them to repentance, and prepare them for the highest felicity. How should my soul be inflamed by so perfect an example ? How diligent to follow such a divine pattern ?

Shall the Creator of the universe exercise his goodness towards his offending creatures (of whom I myself am part) in order for their amendment ? who if he were to destroy us, could raise out of this dust a more noble order of beings, to speak forth his glory. And shall not I, a faulty creature, who stand myself in need of forgiveness, truly compassionate my offending brother ?

Do I dare to implore mercy and pardon from the fountain of love for my ten thousand talents ; and shall I not make it my glory to imitate my God, by cultivating a gentle and friendly disposition, always ready to forgive my offending brother his hundred pence ?

Say, O my soul, how canst thou suffer one moment to pass thee, till thou hast evidenced to thyself thy being posseſt of this divine temper, by sincerely and affectionately imploring all manner of blessings on the man who imprecates all manner of evil upon thee ? and hast manifested that disposition to others, by assisting him on all proper occasions, with the greatest alacrity and chearfulness ? always returning love for hatred ; and good and beneficent actions for such as are unkind and mischievous. Nay; though the malice and enmity of man should arise to such a height, as to deprive thee of this momentary life ; yet let that glorious principle of divine love be perfected in thee, and, with thy dear Lord, let thy last breath be love to thy persecutors, the ardent breathings of warm desires, for their eternal felicity.

And that this blessed disposition may be raised in thee to the highest pitch, constant and uniform, reflect with thyself, to what a dignity it will exalt thee ! To be taken

taken into the society of the supreme God and Father of all, and his only-begotten Son ; to be owned by our Lord as his brethren, and as adopted by, and claiming under him, the glorious character of a Son of God : The highest dignity, the most exalted creature can possibly attain ! A name that carries in it inconceivable glory and happiness, and to which is annexed eternal life.

Nor flatter thyself, O my soul, that this character is attainable, without the steady practice of this amiable precept. Every one is pleased with those who conform to their manners and customs, and cares for the man who cares for them. And what is there praise-worthy in this procedure, to be pleased with being humoured, and to love the man who indulges my passions ?

But wouldest thou be qualified to live for ever ? wouldest thou acquire the exalted title of a child of God ? thou must be like him in all thy actions, and conducted by his great example. Truth, righteousness and goodness must be the rule of thy life ; love and mercy must be the overflowing of thy bosom ; that so imitating our most beneficent Creator in all his divine perfections, thou mayst (in thy sphere) be perfect, as our Father who is in heaven is perfect.



C H A P. VI.

Having instructed you in those parts of your duty, wherein your righteousness is to exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ; I now proceed to shew you in other instances, what practices of theirs you are to abstain from, and what disposition of mind is necessary to your being approved by God ; who only regards the design men have in the performing those very actions which are in themselves commendable and praise-worthy.

TAKE heed
that ye do
not your alms be-
fore men, to be
seen

1, 2 **F**OR instance, in the distribution of alms to the poor, take particular care not to do it in a publick and ostentatious manner : for thereby

seen of them : otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth :

4 That thine alms may be in secret : and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

thereby you will forfeit your reward in the kingdom of God ; as do those hypocrites, who are so solicitous of the praise of men, that they first make proclamation of their design, in the places of greatest resort, and then distribute their alms : These, I say, are sufficiently rewarded, in having their pride gratified by the applause of the spectators.

3 But for you who are my disciples, whose hopes are raised to a better state, let your acts of charity be performed with the greatest privacy.

4 And God, who sees your piety, and approves the temper of mind with which you perform them, will openly reward you, before men and angels, in the day of judgment.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

What is it, O my soul, that thy Lord is now requiring of thee ? but such a disposition as is absolutely necessary both for thy steady performance of all those amiable precepts in which thou hast been already instructed, and for the attaining the approbation of thy God, to whom every thought of the heart, and desire of the soul, is naked and open.

Can thy God approve thee, except thy regard to him is the spring of all thy moral actions ? Can thy moral actions be at all uniform and constant, from any other principle

principle but obedience to him who is constantly and invariably good? Such as is the motive from whence thy actions flow, such will thy actions always be. If the applause of men leads thee to day to a worthy performance, the same applause will make thee to morrow perform the contrary. But if thy desire is to be like to, and approved by thy God, with whom is not the least shadow of change from the eternal laws of righteousness and truth, thou also wilt be the same, universally just and good, not to be perverted by any false amusement.

Treasure up then this precept in thy breast, and perpetually attend to it. Let it be thy first morning thought, how shall I be approved by my God? and how shall I attain to his favour? let every action of thy life be performed from a lively sense of his beholding thee; and let it be the foundation from which it flows. Then shall thou not fear to stand in the day of trial, and God himself will be thy exceeding great reward.

And whereas our most beneficent lawgiver hath kindly mentioned such particular cases, wherein there is most danger of being perverted by outward and temporary views; be thou, O my soul, most careful to guard in every instance, of which he has cautioned thee, lest the praise of man should deprive thee of the probation of thy God.

And since nothing is more apt to strike the human mind, than a compassionate temper, ready to relieve the distrest and miserable, and consequently there is great danger of resting in the applause of men; what thanks are due to the Saviour of mankind, who has so minutely marked out our duty, that our works should not be burnt up, and destroyed?

Guard then, O my soul, against the first approaches to the praise of men; let not thy left-hand know what thy right-hand performs: But as thy hopes are laid up in the favour of thy God, so let thy acts of mercy and kindness have thy God alone for their witness; that so thy faith and fidelity may be proclaimed in the day of righteous retribution, and thy reward assigned thee by God himself.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

6 But thou, when thy prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which feeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

5 Again, when you offer up your petitions to God, you shall not imitate those hypocritical *Pharisees*, who perform their private acts of devotion in the places of greatest resort, that they may be esteemed as persons of more than ordinary sanctity: But be assured, as this is the only reward they seek after, so they shall receive no other.

6 But when you pray, retire in the most private manner, and offer up your supplications to God who is invisible; and God, who (though invisible) sees and approves your disposition, will openly own and reward you.

7 Only let me caution you against repeating in your prayers the same words many times over, as is the practice of the *Gentiles*; who are so foolish as to think their petitions will be the sooner answ'red for their using a multitude of words: when it is alone your inward disposition of mind that God regards, and for which he grants you your requests.

8 Nor does he need to be informed of your necessities, who is perfectly acquainted with all your wants before you name them.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye; Our father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

9 Let your prayers therefore be composed after the following short and comprehensive manner. Almighty God, creator and governour of the world, and the Father of all the faithful, may thy name be sanctified with the greatest reverence and obedience, by all thy reasonable creatures.

10 May the kingdom of thy Son, which thou art erecting in this world, be submitted to by the whole race of mankind; and in conformity to it, may the eternal laws of righteousness and goodness be practised by all men with constancy and alacrity, some way proportionable to what is performed by the heavenly spirits above.

11 Be pleased of thy great goodness, to grant us the necessaries of this life, which thou knowest we stand in need of for our comfortable passage through it.

12 We also intreat thee to forgive us our many sins and iniquities, and remit us the punishment we have most justly deserved: in the comfortable hopes whereof, we are encouraged sincerely to forgive all such who have offended and injured us.

13 Nor suffer us, we beseech thee, to fall into such circumstances, for the chastisement of our offences; as may prove too dangerous snares and temptations to us: but by thy goodness preserve us from the allurements of this present world, and deliver us from evil; more especially, from our own inordinate desires, and the assaults of the evil one. All which we implore of thee our God with the deepest humility; for thine is the kingdom

kingdom we desire may be established; thine is the power which must fix and establish it; and thine will be the glory in so doing, through eternal ages. Amen.

14 For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

14 Thus have I given you a plain and comprehensive form of prayer, to guide you in your addresses to the divine majesty. But what I would have you particularly attend to, is, that you pray that your offences may be forgiven, on your forgiving the offences which men commit against you.

15 Therefore be very careful to acquire the habits of forgiveness and charity; for I assure you, if you do not forgive men the trespasses they commit against you, God will not for any intreaties or prayers you are able to use, forgive you your trespasses: But if you do truly, and from your heart forgive men their offences, God will pass by and forgive your much greater offences against himself.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

Behold, O my Soul, another instance, and that of the greatest importance, wherein our divine lawgiver has guarded thee against being turned aside from thy duty, by the mean desire of the applause of men: A duty that immediately concerns the supreme Lord of all, who views in the clearest light our inmost thoughts and affections, which will determine our future state, and are the great springs of our eternal felicity, or everlasting woe. Think then, what must be expected from thee, his creature, when thou approachest thy great Creator? He has endued thee with reason, and will expect a reasonable service from thee. The service of the lips, without the affection of the heart, is no better than

than sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. But to approach him by outward forms, to gain the esteem of men, bespeaks the vilest hypocrisy, and the basest disposition : It is no less than mocking the governour of the universe, and will be punished with the utmost severity.

Therefore let this law be always before thee, that so the words of thy mouth may be faithful images of the thoughts of thy heart ; and true, though but faint representations of thy inward disposition. And that thou mayst preserve an habitual reverence for thy God, let thy addresses be frequent, thy words few, and those well-ordered before him ; whereby thou wilt deeply impress on thyself, not to be defaced by the show of life, the highest regard for the divine majesty ; that whilst thy body is prostrate before thy God, thy whole self may be resigned to him : Nor dare to hope for his approbation, but in the way of his own appointment. It is holiness of life, and purity of heart, that must carry our petitions to his throne ; it is a vital piety, rejoicing in a cheerful obedience, that must make our requests acceptable to him.

Attend also, and hear what farther thy God requires of thee, that so thy prayers may find access to him. Know then that as thou art a man, and as such ingaged in human affairs, thou standest exposed both to give and receive injuries. Know also, that the acceptance of thy petitions, and the pardon of thy faults, depend on thy cheerful remitting the faults of others. Impress then deeply on thyself the necessity of forbearance, and thy obligation to forgive thy neighbour, on the penalty of not being forgiven thy much more numerous transgressions, with the comfortable assurance, *that the merciful shall obtain mercy.*

And now, O my soul, make a full pause, recollect all thy powers; read again, and again, this most important declaration, which so strongly affects the sons of men : A declaration that carries eternal life or death along with it. What ! have I the word of truth to assure me, that if I indulge anger and revenge, and do not forgive, *I shall not be forgiven*; but that if acquiring a meek and merciful disposition, *I forgive from my*

heart my offending brother, God will forgive my greatest offences: Convinced of this important truth, shall I suffer the furious passions to rage in my bosom? Shall wrath or anger possess my breast? Shall I dare to indulge a revengeful disposition, and fire at every little affront? No, far be it from me; for what is such a conduct, but bidding defiance to the mercy of my judge, and entering into judgment with him? Let me, therefore, as my own eternal felicity is dear to me, pity, forgive, and in silence remit the offences of my brother, as I hope myself to be pitied, forgiven, and to have my own offences passed over in silence: And as I hope to have my trespasses blotted out, let the trespasses of my brother be forgot for ever: That so I may be delivered in the day of temptation, may be preserved from the snares of the evil one, and stand approved in the day of our Lord.

16 Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

16 Lastly, do not imitate the behaviour of the *Pharisees* in their private fasts, who on those occasions appear in publick in the most base and abject manner, neither washing their faces, nor anointing their heads as usual; but they cover themselves with ashes, that so making the most loathsome appearance, they may be taken notice of, and applauded for their remarkable mortification and abstinence. And they have their reward accordingly, which ends in the applause of men.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face:

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which

17, 18 But when you keep a private fast, appear as at other times, drest, and cheerful, without any sign of severity; that men may not suspect that sincere humiliation which you truly practise; and God, who tho' invisible, sees your secret and unfeigned piety, will publickly declare and reward it, when the actions of all men shall be made manifest.

which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Attend, O my soul, to thy Lord, who now proceeds to regulate thy conduct in a practice which does not appear to be enjoined under the Christian dispensation; but is left to the prudence of the humble and pious, as they shall find the weakning of the body necessary to the subduing of sensitive life, and reducing the passions and appetites to a due subjection to the rational powers, and the laws of God.

Treasure up then in thy heart this caution before thee, and weigh well the design of it. To withdraw thee from the applause of men, and fix thy hopes on the approbation of thy God: To despise all outward shew and appearance, whilst thou art pursuing sensual mortification and internal purity. A design worthy a being made for immortality, and intended for celestial honour and glory.

Therefore, whenever thou shalt judge, O my soul, that abstinence may be helpful to advance thee in the spiritual life, which stands in no need of the sight of men to give it its proper force, as it rather withdraws the mind from its true design, prevents its efficacy, and destroys its usefulness: Then, I say, let this precept be always before thee, that neither insolence nor vain-glory may lead thee aside; which would render this very action, designed for thy good, extremely faulty and criminal.

Is there not real danger of resting in the applause of men, when they are made the spectators of my mortifications and fastings?

To what end should my abstinence appear to the world, which is only to prepare me for the mercy of God?

Why should they be witnesses of my humiliation, who have no part in bestowing the reward?

Beware then, O my soul, of all external shew and appearance; let thy abstinence be hid from the eyes of men, that thou mayst be approved by thy all-seeing

Judge. And whereas its true design is to create the deepest contrition, and to beget the greatest abhorrence of sin and iniquity; so be very careful that it produces in thee the utmost humiliation for thy own offences, and the sincerest compassion for thy neighbours. For know that all bodily severities, which are not accompanied with, and tend to perfect the habits of meekness, humility and love, are but so many refined vices, and aggravations of our faults.

Thankfully then acknowledge the goodness of thy Lord, who hath graciously guarded against all pride and ostentation in voluntary mortifications, and has so fully discovered to us wherein their usefulness consists; always remembering, that it is alone their improving a humble and pious mind that can render them approved by our God, and their making the heart better, that in the day of righteous retribution will intitle them to any reward.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

21 For

19 On the whole, do not set your affections on the transitory enjoyments of this life, which consist either in the pomp and riches of this world, or in the applause of man, whose life perishes with his breath, and is at best but of very short continuance, and which you are liable every moment to have taken from you by the most inconsiderable and trifling accidents:

20 But let your riches consist in a well-established faith, and a pious and useful life; in loving the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself; whereby you will lay up a treasure for another world, of which no unhappy accident can deprive you, but it will remain a lasting and durable possession, when this earth and all things in it shall disappear for ever.

21 And

Sixth Chapter of MATTHEW. 53

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

21 And I assure you, that one of these must be your portion : For if you settle your affections on the perishing possessions of this world, they will root out that resigned and pious disposition which the Christian religion requires ; but if your happiness depends on the hopes of the favour of God, and his approbation, it will wean you from these fleeting satisfactions, and fix your thoughts on the durable happiness of the ever-blessed kingdom of God in heaven.

22 The light of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

22 For it is with the mind, as it is with the eye, which, if it is clear and in order, discovers distinctly the various objects about it, whereby the man is enabled to perform the several parts of life with ease and delight ; so if the mind has acquired the habits of piety and goodness, it is fitted to perform the Christian virtues, steady and cheerful.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness ?

23 But if the eye is disordered, and represents the object confused and indistinct, it will more discompose and distract the man, than if the eye was intirely dark. So if the mind has contracted the vicious habits of ambition, envy and covetousness, that man is in a more terrible condition, than a mere sensitive man who never exerted the powers of his mind.

24 No man can serve two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.

Ye

24 Thus you see the impossibility of obeying two masters at once, whose designs are opposite : for you must of necessity pursue the interest of one, and neglect the other's ; or love and esteem the one, and slight and despise the other. And this must be the case of every one of you, as it regards

Ye cannot serve
God and mam-
mon.

gards your love to God, and this present world : for you cannot practise the duties of the Christian life, and at the same time give yourselves up to the pursuit of worldly pleasure or grandeur. Therefore if you will be my disciples, you must apply yourselves to the study and practice of my laws, with which your future happiness is inseparably connected, whereby you will acquire every habit necessary to your eternal welfare, and be made to practise them with the greatest cheerfulness and alacrity.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Rest a while, O my Soul, and contemplate the amazing love and compassion of thy Lord and Master ; who has not only performed the part of a righteous wise lawgiver, obliging by the noblest precepts, every way fitted to exalt our natures to their utmost perfection, and perfectly adapted to qualify us for an eternal existence ; but condescends to win us to glory and happiness, by the most affectionate addresses both to our understanding and passions.

What then, shall my Lord convince me in the most engaging manner of the folly of pursuing two opposite interests ; and shall I suffer the perishing enjoyments of this life to come in competition with those which are never fading and eternal ?

Can folly so far possess me, that having an everlasting inheritance set before me, I can trifle it away for such transitory and uncertain riches, which I may, by a thousand accidents, be deprived of the very next moment ?

Can I so miserably impose upon myself, as to suffer a rivalship in my breast between the ever-blessed God, the only fountain of peace, order and true felicity, and that evil and malicious one, the sole author of woe and disorder, who miserably blinds the minds of his followers with false representations of this

this fleeting and vain world, till the scene ends in their utter ruin?

Wouldst thou then triumph over thy spiritual enemies, and have the God of thy life and salvation thy portion for ever; diligently attend to thy Lord, that thou mayst acquire that simplicity of mind, and singleness of heart, that nothing may turn thee from pursuing thy true interest.

If sensitive enjoyments strike thee, say, Shall I sacrifice the favour of God, and the Lamb, for pleasures so vain, that they cloy in the very possessing? If pomp and shew of life attack thee (think with thyself) Shall I for a momentary splendor, which only begets envy in my inferiors, contempt in my superiors, and no durable satisfaction to myself, but too too often the reverse; Shall I (I say) forfeit that true glory and dignity that my Lord woos me to partake of, and which God will bestow on the patient continuer in well-doing, before the whole rational creation, and which will be but an introduction to an eternal felicity as great as it is lasting? No, far be the thought; let me attend to my great lawgiver; let his laws be the sole rule of my actions, whilst my will is intirely swallowed up in the will of my judge; that when this earth shall be burnt up, the elements run down a liquid fire, and nature itself expiring, I may be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, that where he is, I may be also; and being clothed with the same glory, may behold him as he is, with uninterrupted transport, and everlasting joy.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on: Is not the life more then meat, and the body than raiment?

25 Therefore, I say unto all my disciples, Suffer not any of the affairs of this life to ingrofs your thoughts and attention: But as for you whom I have more immediately called to propagate my doctrine to the world, I command that you do not so much as suffer your minds to be employed about even the providing of that necessary food and raiment, which your very make, and the general circumstances

stances of human nature require : For the work I employ you in will call for all your time and industry. Yet let not this injunction discourage you, nor slacken your zeal in my service ; for God who gave you your very beings, and hath called you by me to be the dispensers of the Christian religion, and knows your lives are necessary to this work ; he, I say, will take care that you shall want nothing that is fitting to carry you through it.

26 Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ?

27 Which of you by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature ?

28 And why take ye thought for

26 And to encourage you to a cheerful and ready obedience, contemplate on the circumstances of the very birds of the field ; they make no provision for futurity, and yet the providence of God so orders it, that they find a sufficient supply both for themselves and their young ; and that so constantly, that their species are continued through the several ages of the world : And can you doubt of his protection, who has set you apart for so noble and excellent a work ; and who consequently are so much more useful and better than they ?

27 And that I may intirely wean you from any uneasiness that may arise from worldly affairs, know, that if you perform the work you are called to, as you ought, it will so intirely ingage you, that any thoughtfulness about your temporal concerns, will be of as little service to you, as the being solicitous about the growth of your body would be of service to the increase of your stature.

28, 29 And as to your apparel, why should you doubt of a sufficient provision ?

for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.

29 And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all

vision; when the very flowers of the field are adorned with a beauty far superior to all the pomp of dress and shew, that even Solomon, the most delicate and luxurious of all the princes of the *East*, could boast of in his greatest glory?

30 Therefore let not the seeming severity of this precept make you to be offended at my doctrine, nor to waver in your duty; for surely your faith must be very small, if you can see all that elegancy that is bestowed on the very herbage, which is but of few days continuance, and then perishes for ever, yet can doubt of God's providing for you, whom he hath immediately employed in a work of the greatest importance.

31, 32 I therefore once more caution you against all uneasy apprehensions about food and raiment, and the necessary demands of the body, from a steady belief of your being under his immediate protection, who thoroughly knows your wants, and will infallibly supply them: For it is only excusable in the blind and uninformed Heathen, who worship stocks and stones, and whose expectations are chiefly limited to this life, eagerly to pursue sensitive enjoyments, as their great and principal good.

33 But, for you, let the great concerns of the Messiah's kingdom, which God is now erecting by you in the world, and that perfect rule

all these things
shall be added unto
you.

of righteousness which is introduced by it, whereby you are prepared for an eternal happy duration, be your constant study and practice; and the good providence of God will certainly supply all your outward wants and necessities.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

34 Wherefore being convinced that you are under the immediate protection of the governour of the world, let no future cares discompose or perplex you; for assure your selves, that the oppositions and trials that you will meet with from the vices and bigotry of men, will give you sufficient uneasiness, without your ruffling your own minds about the affairs of this life, which to you in particular are of no moment; nor will your giving yourselves any concern about them, answer any wise or good end.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Here, O my soul, are fresh instances of the goodness of our indulgent Lord and Master, who kindly affords such a large field for contemplation, and opens a prospect as delightful as useful; whereby the whole man is prepared to run with chearfulness the race that is set before him.

Here from a great variety of plain and familiar instances, we are led to a dependance on our God, from the strongest assurances of divine assistance under every difficulty, to which the pious man can be exposed in this probational state.

And though the injunctions before thee may in the strictest sense more immediately refer to the apostles, and the first propagators of the gospel; yet they also belong to every man who fears God, and departs from iniquity; who as he is obliged as a Christian to suffer nothing to divert him from his duty, so whilst he faithfully

fully performs it, he is secure of being always favoured with all necessary supports, and is assured, that according to his day so shall his strength be.

Am I then so placed in life, that the labour of the body is necessary for my subsistence? Let me perform with chearfulness the part allotted me, without being anxious for a future supply: for why should I be solicitous for what I may never want? or if I should, it could be but for a very short period, and will be made to answer some worthy end, which will fully compensate for all my sorrows; and consequently 'tis of too little moment to withdraw my thoughts from that everlasting state, in which I must be either unspeakably happy, or inexpressibly miserable.

If I am placed in a higher station, freed from the necessity of constant labour for my daily food; let me use the indulgent gift to the glory of the bountiful Giver, and my own eternal advantage, without being solicitous to aggrandize myself in this life, or to acquire a superiority over others, which cannot afford me any true or durable felicity, but would be much more likely to deprive me of that sincere tranquillity, which a thankful mind, content with its proper station, always affords.

Reflect with thyself in what rank thou standest in the creation! A being endowed with thought and reflection, capable of penetrating into the invisible and intellectual world: And at the same time that I feel the vanity of all sublunary things, I have a prospect opened to me of an eternal happy duration. Is it then possible that I can let go such a glorious immortality to catch at something which my own experience assures me is less than a shadow? No, let me first seek the kingdom of God, and that righteousness which he has made essential to it, and whatever is needful, of these fleeting goods, to carry me through this state of probation, I need not doubt but they shall be bestowed upon me.

Distract not then thyself, O my soul, with vain hopes and useless fears; consider this world as it is, frail and perishing, and which at best we must quit in a very little time; withdraw therefore thy affections from all its enjoyments, let them ingross no place in thy

heart: use the world itself but as a means to secure a never-fading crown of glory, which in the day of recompence the righteous Judge will bestow on the patient continuer in well-doing.

C H A P. VII.

Having shewed you the disposition of mind necessary to your admission into the Messiah's kingdom; I now proceed to give you some general precepts with regard to your conduct in life, arising from your knowledge of the Christian religion, that it may become truly beneficial to you.

1 JUDGE not,
that ye be
not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge,
ye shall be judged:
and with what measure ye mete,
it shall be measured to you again.

1, 2 TO which end, take great care, that the knowledge which hath thus freely been bestowed upon you, does not fill you with pride and ambition; and more especially guard against a censorious temper of mind, and rash judging of others, for every little failure in conduct, or mistake in judgment; lest you yourselves, who are also guilty of many faults, meet with as severe a censure from God. For, I assure you, that at the day of judgment, God will deal with you in a method proportionable to your treatment of your fellow-servants; either with compassion and mercy, or with severity and rigour.

3 And why be-
holdest thou the
mote that is in thy
brothers eye, but
considerest not the
beam that is in
thine own eye?

3 Therefore carefully avoid the insolent behaviour of the hypocritical Pharisees, who severely censure men for the neglect of the more inconsiderable parts of the positive law, such as the tything of mint and cummin, whilst themselves neglect the great

great duties of justice and charity, those weightier parts of the moral law, without which it is impossible to obtain the favour of God.

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye ; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye ?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye ; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brothers eye.

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.

4 For how can you reprove your brother for his mistakes or failings, when you stand convinced in your own minds of having acted contrary to the eternal laws of truth and justice ?

5 Therefore, abhorring such hypocritical practices, first sincerely amend your own lives, and then you will be qualified either to instruct or reform your neighbour, by applying to him in a kind and judicious manner, suitable to his temper and disposition of mind.

6 Not but that I would have you distinguish between a man who in general leads a sober and inoffensive life, though guilty of some considerable failings, and obdurate and profligate offenders, who would only treat your kind reproofs with reproach and injury ; whom it is better to leave in their wickedness, than to expose your persons, by kind offices, to their resentments, when you have no prospect of doing them any good.

S O L I L O Q U Y .

Attend, O my soul, to thy Lord, and hearken to his dictates ; that duly improving thy talent, thou mayst be found faithful in the day of thy Lord.

Hath his voice been heard in thy streets ? have thy powers been inobled by his doctrines ? hath wisdom enter'd into thine heart ? and hath thy understanding been enlarged by his words ? be very careful to employ all thy

thy improvements to the glory of God and the Lamb, and use them to the advantage of all around thee.

Better had it been for thee, that thy lot had been cast in the land of darkness, that thy portion had been assigned thee among the blind Heathen, and that knowledge had never entered thy dwelling, than that pride or censoriousness should possess thy breast. The perfection of knowledge, is humility; and the perfection of humility, is obedience and love.

What is the supreme excellency of the Christian religion? and wherein does its inimitable beauty consist? but in humility of heart, and meekness of life, in a spirit of universal love and goodness; which as it is the ground-work, so it is the glory of the Christian institution: A temper of soul that qualifies us for an eternal felicity, in the constant exercise of every social virtue.

It is this amiable disposition that puts an end to strife and contention, that roots out unreasonable prejudices against our neighbour, and silences all odious names of reproach for difference of opinion and judgment. It is love and good-will that teaches us to view our own faults with severity, and our neighbour's with candour. A temper of mind absolutely necessary both for our own reformation, and the convincing of others.

It is by this universal goodness and benignity of mind, that I become qualified to obey the injunction before me, and to avoid that fatal and pernicious practice of judging another man's servant. It is by this disposition alone, that the knowledge of truth, and the practice of virtue, can obtain in the world.

Attend then, O my soul, to the voice of thy Lord. Suppress in thyself all insolence of behaviour and love of dominion; nor suffer any difference of sentiment to excite thee to anger; neither dare to aggravate the failings of thy brother, nor treat him with arrogance or contempt: But always remember, that such a conduct is itself a beam, which, till it is removed out of thine own eye, unqualifies thee to judge of the mote in thy brother's eye.

Therefore imitating the meekness and gentleness, the kindness and patience of the Prince of peace, with wisdom

wisdom apply thyself to the weakness of thy brother, in the spirit of love and compassion ; that when thy Lord shall come to take cognizance of thy actions, thou mayst be found among those faithful and wise servants, who have wisely distributed according to the portion allotted to them, and whom our Lord will make rulers over all his goods.

But the wisdom and goodness of our kind and beneficent Master does not stop here ; no, he has taught us to join with goodness of heart, and sweetnes of disposition, prudence and caution in a faulty world.

Whilst I am to omit no occasion of affisiting and guiding the teachable mind, of recovering the lost, and bringing back the strayed ; I am kindly cautioned to withdraw from the perversly wicked, and to leave the obstinate and irreclaimable to their own devices ; lest whilst I am fruitlessly ingaged in their reformation, I suffer loss, both from that spirit of malice and revenge, which always accompanies the obdurate and knowingly faulty, and also from the hurt my own temper may receive from the perverseness of the malicious and spiteful offender.

Instructed thus fully in thy duty, chearfully ingage in the practice of it. Let thy own faults teach thee to pity the infirmities of thy brother ; let the good effects that a kind treatment hath upon thyself, make thee very careful in thy conduct towards thy neighbour, and diligently guard against magnifying the mote in thy brother's eye, whilst thou hardly takest notice of the beam in thine own eye ; but let the only use thou makest of his failings, be his recovery, that so both may be saved in the day of our Lord.

Therefore retreating from all wrath and contention, be always diligent to preserve a meek and calm disposition ; that attaining the steady habits of righteousness, love and peace, thou mayst be clothed in white raiment, and stand with exceeding joy before the Son of man.

7 Ask, and it
shall be given you :
seek, and ye shall
find : knock, and
it

7 But know that a constant de-
pendence on the divine affiance is
absolutely necessary to your per-
formance of these great duties of
Christianity ;

it shall be opened unto you.

8 For every one that asketh, receiveth : and he that seeketh, findeth : and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ?

11 If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ?

12 There-

Christianity ; which assistance you must implore with constancy and fervency.

8 And God who hears your sincere prayers, put up with constancy and fervency, will give you all things necessary for your support and assistance.

9 Which assistance no one who performs his duty can in the least doubt of, who does but reflect, that even among the very worst of men, how morose or ill-temper'd soever, yet if a child intreats his father for the necessaries of life, he will not in return give him what will at best be but useless to him :

10 Nor if he asks for any further assistance, will he give him what will hurt or injure him.

11 And if daily experience convinces you of this truth, viz. that the most base and wicked of the human race have a natural affection for their children, and take pleasure in supplying their wants, and giving them what is fitting and convenient ; how much more shall God, the kindest of beings, who both created and continues to sustain you, and hath taken you into the relation of children, and condescends to be invoked by the indearing name of your heavenly Father, give you all that necessary assistance your circumstances require ; whilst you behave as dutiful and obedient children, and continue to implore it of him in a humble and submissive manner ?

12 And

Seventh Chapter of MATTHEW. 65

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

12 And being convinced of the goodness of God to those who fear him, let this be the foundation of your own conduct towards one another, making this the great rule of your actions, That whatsoever you expect from, or think reasonable another should do for you, that you be always ready cheerfully to do for another. This is that great and important truth, which natural religion most strongly teaches; this is that truth, which the several revelations given both by *Moses* and the prophets, have endeavoured to restore in a sinful world; and this is that truth which I am come to enforce and perfect, and which I have now explained in a great variety of instances, and is indeed the foundation both of all moral virtue, and of all the refined precepts of religion, in which I have now instructed you.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Art thou convinced, O my soul, not only of the existence, but of the wisdom and goodness of that supreme Being, whose power laid the foundation of the earth, and at whose word the heavens were formed; whose wisdom conducts the innumerable orbs, and preserves the order and harmony of the universe; whose goodness gives life and breath to the great variety of animal and intelligent beings, and continues them thro' their proper periods, making constant provision for their preservation and happiness?

And art thou further convinced, that the same almighty and most beneficent Being hath in a particular manner had regard to the human race; and by his beloved Son from heaven hath not only delivered us from the condemnation to which our breach of his righteous laws had exposed us, but hath opened to us an ever-

during happy existence, when this world, and all that is in it, shall be burnt up and consumed?

And am I further assured, that the just shall live by faith; and hath the infallible prophet from on high declared to us, that the obedient and teachable mind, that from a steady belief of the veracity of God, implores with constancy and fervency the things which are necessary and convenient, shall be infallibly heard and assisted; and shall I in any case mistrust that power, wisdom and goodness, whilst I humbly resign myself to his will, and constantly depend upon him?

Then, that thy views may be enlarged, and thy faith strengthened, and that no present disappointment or suffering may be able to move thee; diligently attend to the strong demonstration thy Lord has so beautifully exhibited to thee.

Say, O my soul, is it possible that thy bountiful Creator could implant such a surprizing tenderness in the whole animal creation for their offspring, and that even the most sordid of the human race should be so deeply concerned for their young, that there is hardly any inconvenience but what they willingly submit to for their preservation and happiness; and canst thou doubt of his fatherly care, from whom all this profusion of benevolence springs?

Warmed then with the assured hope of divine protection, fix thy whole thoughts on thy duty, which gives thee both a right to thy Creator's favour, and insures it to thee; which as it is the first of blessings, so nothing but thy own folly can deprive thee of it.

Let then thy mercy and goodness to thy neighbour intitle thee to the mercy and favour of thy God: Wouldst thou be under his gracious protection, do thou cheerfully assist all whom his providence has placed under thy inspection, and joyfully perform every action of kindness to another, which thou wouldst have another do to thyself: *For verily there is a reward for the righteous.*

Being thus prepared, by a humble and holy obedience, for an intire trust and dependence on thy God; cast all thy care upon him, for he careth for thee, and will never leave nor forsake the humble and contrite spirit. If he tries thee with afflictions, it is but to purify thee,

Seventh Chapter of MATTHEW. 67

thee, and make thee more white ; if he deprives thee of these perishing riches, it is but that thou mayst partake more abundantly of the true and never-fading riches ; if sickness and pain are thy portion, it is only that thy spiritual health may be advanced, and thy strength renewed as an eagle's ; art thou deprived of thy dearest friends and relations, it is but that thou shouldest be brought so much nearer to the source of glory, the origin of all true felicity.

O blessed Saviour, what support dost thou afford the human mind, labouring under the agonizing woes of this afflictive life, whilst thou dost assure to the patient attender on his God, the friendship of omnipotence, and the sure protection of infinite wisdom and goodness ; an inward fountain of spiritual bliss and consolation springing up for ever.

Raised then by the firm and constant hopes of the favour of him whose favour alone is life and eternal felicity ; trust in his power, submit to his wisdom, rejoice in his mercy and goodness ; and performing thy duty with joy and alacrity, cry out with the transported believing prophet : *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine ; though the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; though the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

13 Enter ye in
at the strait gate ;
for wide is the gate,
and broad is the
way that leadeth
to destruction, and
many there be
which go in there-
at :

14 Because strait
is the gate, and
narrow is the way
which leadeth unto
life,

13 However difficult these exalted doctrines may appear to you, yet the practice of them is absolutely necessary, if you will be my disciples, and hope for any interest in that salvation which I offer ; whereas that sensual and vicious course of life, in which the greatest part of mankind indulge themselves, must unavoidably end in their utter destruction.

14 For the attaining that future and ever-blessed life, which the Christian religion proposes, requires that care and industry to improve the reasonable

life, and few there
be that find it.

sonable powers of the mind, and to
acquire such spiritual habits of good-
ness and piety, which the body of
men who are sunk in the pleasures
and vanities of this life, will not be
at the pains of obtaining.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Here rest a while, O my soul, and carefully review
the ways of life and death, which thy Lord and Judge
hath marked out, and set before thee with the greatest
plainness.

The one the broad and flowery road of sensitive life,
the other the narrow and laborious path of duty and
instruction. The one flattering for a while the thought-
less unattentive mind, till it ends in eternal night ; the
other uneasy and difficult at its first entrance, but its
steps lead to light and joy, and end in everlasting day.

Hear then, O my soul, and thou shalt not see death,
neither shall thy feet stumble in the dark mountains.
*To be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded
is life and peace.*

If thou wilt live the life of the brute, thou must perish with him ; but if thou wilt greatly raise thy powers, enoble thy views, obey thy Lord, and imitate thy Creator, thou shalt live for ever.

The sensitive life must end with sensitive things ; and the mind that contents itself with shadows, must as a shadow disappear : But the man who desires instruction, and withdraws from contention ; who mourning his past offences, hungers and thirsts after righteousness and truth ; who is prepared by goodness of heart, and purity of life, for the blessed vision of the only living and true God ; and by the constant exercise of mercy and patience, is fitted to do his will ; as he thereby becomes qualified to be employed by his God throughout the whole creation, so he shall endure for ever, his bliss shall be perpetual, and his glory everlasting. To him it is given to rise through the ages of eternity in the scale of being, and to be perpetually more and more conformed to the image of his God ; whom to resemble, is the only

true

true excellency, and the supreme glory and dignity of the most exalted being.

This, O my soul, is to live and to be happy, and this alone is worthy the existence of the rational mind. To reject it, is *the folly of fools*; but to comply with it, is glory, honour and immortality. *To him who thus overcomes* (faith the Lord and Giver of life and glory) *will I grant to set on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.*

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is

hewn

15 Yet let me caution you, that when my exhortations have warmed your minds to the sincere practice of religion, you do not implicitly follow every one who comes with the shew of external mortification and humility; for many impostors will arise in the church, who will make appearance of great abstinence, that they may more effectually prey upon, and devour you.

16 But that you may be able to discover such pernicious teachers, consider that in the vegetable world you do not find grapes to be produced by thorns, nor do you gather figs from thistles.

17, 18, 19 Neither does bad fruit grow on a tree whose kind is good, nor good fruit on a tree whose kind is bad; but as soon as you perceive the sort to be faulty, you cut it down as only fit for the fire. So the great design of religion being to make men good and pious, and these false teachers having always some private temporal interest or lust to gratify, directly opposite to the pure precepts of Christianity, which takes men off from this world, and fixes their expectations on a better life; these pretenders

70 A PARAPHRASE on the

hewn down and cast into the fire.

tenders therefore, being defective in the very first principles of justice and charity, are to be utterly rejected, as such as are set apart for destruction.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

20 Therefore be not discouraged that such deceivers are permitted; for if you will impartially examine for yourselves, you will be able to form a true judgment of those who pretend to be the instructors of mankind, so as to reject such as would deceive and ruin you, and approve such as are indeed the teachers of truth and righteousness.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Here, O my soul, is another instance of the kind concern of thy indulgent Lord and Master, who will not lose one of the human race whom the Father has given him; but will lead the humble and teachable, and conduct the meek to eternal glory and happiness.

The Christian institution is an address to our reason, and obliges to examination: Our blessed Saviour hath left it upon record, that truth will bear the light. He has called us to be wise as well as honest, and to join with an upright heart an understanding mind.

My sheep know my voice, is the declaration of the true Shepherd of God's fold. He has enlarged the path, and opened the way, so that none who attend can miss it; of which the caution before thee is a worthy proof. By this kind warning thou art guarded against imposture, and delivered from the artful deluder.

Instructed then by thy great lawgiver, suffer not a false humility to mislead thee, by giving up thy judgment to a man like thyself; neither fear the vain terror of the boasting impostor. Diligently study the will of thy Lord, apply thyself to understand his doctrines, conform thy life to his laws, and let all thy actions flow from a sincere and constant regard to God and the Lamb, obeying the truth in the love of it; and fear not what vain man can do unto thee.

It

It is by this temper of mind that thou art clothed with true humility ; it is by this disposition that thou art qualified for the service of thy God. By this thou wilt rightly judge between the faithful instructor, and the crafty deluder. The follower of the Lamb, must be as the Lamb, meek, and lowly of heart ; ready for every good work ; neither to break, nor to bruise, but to bind up and heal : Not to throw about thunders and anathema's for difference of judgment, establishing doctrines with sword and fire, but to bear with the weak, to guide with mercy and judgment, and by love and compassion to fulfil the law.

Let this caution then, O my soul, be a double guard upon thee, both to guide thee in forming thy judgment of others, and to regulate thy own conduct towards such as are under thee. Let no man lord it over thy faith, neither do thou treat thy brother imperiously ; but behave thyself with wisdom and prudence, meekness and goodness ; that when thy Lord shall come to render to every one according to his works, thou mayst be intrusted with power over the nations, and be honoured with the morning star *.

21 Not every one that faith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven : but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many

21 And that I may excite you to great care and diligence in the regulating your lives and actions, know assuredly, that no mere external profession of my religion, or acknowledgment of my authority, will intitle you to the favour of God ; for the happiness of the heavenly state is alone reserved for those who carefully attend to the will of God made known by me, and yield a sincere and steady obedience to it.

22 Nay

* By the morning star, which brings in the day, must at least be meant progressive knowledge perpetually increasing in the most diffusive manner, and raising the sincere and diligent inquirer to the utmost pitch to which his nature is capable of being exalted.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

22 Nay further, though the Providence of God should make use of any persons, in propagating my gospel, so far as even to impower them to predict future events, nay, visibly to restrain the power of evil spirits, and to perform the most astonishing miracles, and thereby become truly instrumental in spreading the Christian religion in the world;

23 Yet if their lives have been contrary to my laws, and they have been sensual, unrighteous, proud and censorious, in the day of righteous judgment I shall disown them as my disciples, and all the return I shall make them for their profession of service to me, shall be, I own you not for my subjects, who have not obeyed my commands; therefore as you have not conformed yourselves to the laws of justice and goodness, ye shall have no place in the Messiah's kingdom, where nothing that defiles or offends shall be permitted to enter.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Now bow, O my soul, and tremble before thy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity with approbation, and who will in no case clear the guilty: Search then thy heart and try it, that no corrupt thing may be found therein. Obedience is joy and peace, disobedience is death eternal.

Flatter then not thyself, that the worthy name by which thou art called, will stand thee in any stead if thy life and actions contradict thy profession. Nor think that any degree of knowledge will be of any service to thee, if thou indulgest iniquity in thine heart. No, though thou boastest thyself of being an instructor of others, a guide to the ignorant, and eyes to the blind; if thou abusest

abusest the dispensation thou art favoured with, thy light to thee is darkness, and thy glory thy shame; thou art an enemy to God and the Lamb, and hast in the most sensible manner affronted thy Saviour. The power of heaven, in which thou hast gloried, is now ready to crush thee, and nothing remains but that fearful sentence, *Depart from me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Warned then by thy most merciful Saviour, watch over the thoughts of thy heart, and the actions of thy life, that a pure stream may flow from a pure fountain; think what is the hope of the hypocrite, and where will be his end; that avoiding the very appearance of evil, thou mayst adhere to the law of thy Lord, and rejoice in the God of thy salvation, adorning the doctrine of thy Lord and Master by an unfeigned piety, attended with the universal practice of justice, temperance, and love.

Here then, O my soul, is thy rest, a rest more durable than the heavens, and more permanent than time; when all sublunary things shall vanish, the righteous shall stand sure, and never be moved; prepare then thyself by a diligent examination and a uniform obedience, to meet thy Lord in his glory, that having faithfully performed the will of thy God, thou mayst receive before men and angels that blessed sentence, *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

24 Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the

24, 25 The great design then of the Christian religion being to rectify the minds, and form the actions of men, in order to their everlasting establishment; therefore those who attend to my doctrine, and profess my institution, may very fitly be compared to builders, and they will succeed accordingly. For as a wise builder fixes his house upon a rock, which when the time of rain comes, resists all the shocks
K

the winds blew, and beat upon that house : and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

shocks both of furious hurricanes of wind, and violent torrents of water, because its foundation is fixed and solid : So the man who being convinced of my mission, does with a humble and teachable mind conform himself to these eternal rules of piety and virtue, shall be protected under all the afflictions and trials of human life, and death itself shall be no more than the means to introduce him into an infinitely more durable and happy state.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand :

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house : and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

26, 27 But the man who makes only an outward profession of my religion, and joins not to the belief of my mission, a faithful obedience to my laws ; he is like to a foolish builder, who erects his house upon the sand, which being easily moved, gives way with the first tempest of wind and rain, and the house is overthrown and carried away by the storm. So the mere outward professor shall be exposed in the day of trial here, and at the day of righteous judgment shall be sentenced to a more terrible punishment than the rest of the world ; from which he shall never escape.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

As light excelleth darkness, so is wisdom more excellent than folly. But what folly can compare with shutting the eye in broad day, when the man is surrounded with bogs and sands ? Light indeed is come into the world, and if we do not receive it, it is because we love darkness, and hate the light.

The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding in him who is true ; and from him who is true, hath brought life and immortality to sinful man ; and

and this goodness of thy God hath reached thine ears. The wise builder, or the foolish, must be thy character, and thy lot will be accordingly. Thou must either rejoice in thy work, or thyself and work must perish for ever ; for our God is a consuming fire to the ungodly and wicked.

Awake then, O my soul, to righteousness, and sin no more. The night is far spent, and the day draws on apace ; the important day, when every man's work shall be exposed naked and open. Apply thyself then to the laws of thy Lord, make them thy daily employment and study, and treasure them up in thine heart, that thou mayst produce the fruits of righteousness to eternal life. Think with thyself, shall the only-begotten Son of God leave his glory to instruct me in the way of salvation, and give up his life on the accursed tree, that my transgressions should be blotted out, and that I should not see death ; and shall I be so lost in folly, as obstinately to reject such a profusion of mercy ? If thou dost, be it at thy peril, thy condemnation is just.

God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life ; and shall I, as far as it is in my power, disappoint the very goodness of God ? No, far better would it be for thee, that a mill-stone was tied about thy neck, and that thou wert thrown into the midst of the sea, than that thou shouldst reduce thyself to such a condition, that mercy itself cannot save thee.

Arise then to the work before thee, let thy danger alarm thee, and the reward excite thee. Thou hast thy God and the Lamb to support thee, the Holy Spirit to assist thee ; thy lusts only are thine enemies, and thy irregular passions thine only foes. The victory is thine, if despising the allurements of sense, thou wilt fix but thine eye on the reward before thee.

Go on then in the might of thy God, lay thy foundation on the rock of ages, a sure hold for all who build on it ; be superior to both the pleasures

and terrors of this momentary life, and let the laws of God's Messiah be the rule of all thy actions; that when thou shalt have finished this probational state, thou mayst be made a pillar in the house of thy God, and be found worthy to be constituted an instructor in truth and righteousness to future worlds.

28 And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.

28 Jesus having finished this important body of laws, given for the obtaining life and immortality, the people were extremely surprized both at the excellency of his doctrine, which reached the very hearts and consciences of his hearers, and the manner in which he delivered it.

29 For he uttered it with great seriousness and authority, as one who had received his mission immediately from heaven, and whereof he had just before given the most incontestable proofs. Whereas the discourses they were used to hear from their doctors, were composed on trifling and impertinent subjects, chiefly founded on the authority of their Rabbi's, and only supported by their uncertain traditions.

S O L I L O Q U Y.

Since, O my soul, thou hast been so greatly favoured, as to be admitted to a full and impartial view of this glorious body of divine laws, every way adapted to our make, whose sole tendency is to enoble the mind, to make the heart good, to purify the imagination, and make the very passions subervient to religion and virtue; laws worthy to be exhibited by so transcendent a person as the only-begotten Son of God: Since, I say, thou hast been so greatly favoured, think seriously with thyself both of the importance of them, and of

the

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the necessity of thy obedience. Think what a scene of glory and honour God is preparing for them who obey him; view with the most grateful transport the kind provision he hath made by these wise and righteous precepts for a fit set of inhabitants to possess that new heaven, and new earth, wherein only righteousness, love, and peace are to dwell for ever; and diligently attend to that blessed disposition, which alone can gain admission into the holy city, and give a right to enter into the paradise of God.

Then say, O my soul, wilt thou embrace this celestial embassador, who has spoke as never man before him spoke? Wilt thou submit to this divine legislator, whose laws will qualify thee to become a child of God, and fit thee for an eternal duration?

It is by these most excellent precepts, that our natures are spiritualized, our persons sanctified, and body, soul and spirit fitted for the heavenly state. A plan worthy its giver, and worthy to be introduced by the so long promised and wished for Messiah; the person most acceptable to God, and dear to him, who was ushered into the world by predictions that filled up the space of four thousand years, introduced by angelick messengers and divine inspirations; to whom was given the spirit without measure, and who performed every supernatural action of goodness and mercy, who by a voice from the divine glory—
This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him, is declared to be our great conductor to immortal glory and honour; and this is a universal call to the sons of men to attend to him.

This is that glorious person, who by his own blood hath opened a way into the true holy of holies for the offending race of men; and has assured to the patient continuall in well-doing, by his own most glorious resurrection, and ascension into heaven, a certain admittance into it.

This, O my soul, is the Prince of peace, the Saviour of mankind, the person by whom alone God will shew mercy to a sinful world, *Hear thou him:*

For

For worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; therefore with every creature in heaven, and earth, and under the earth, join, O my soul, and by a constant and uniform obedience loudly proclaim blessing, and honour, and glory, and power to thy God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen, Amen.

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

PAGE 1. in the first paragraph, place a full stop after the word you. p. 6. line 3. place the comma after you. p. 8. l. 4. from the bottom, place only a semicolon. p. 10. l. 4. read have. p. 11. l. 11. r. let not. p. 13. l. 1. insert only at the beginning of the line. p. 24. l. 5. r. conflict. p. 32. l. 14. of the Soliloquy, r. transgression. p. 34. l. 6. r. solitary. p. 37. l. 33. r. retaliation. Those literal faults, which do not disturb the sense, the reader will be so good as to excuse. p. 27. l. 11. from the bottom, after God's Messiah, these words should have been inserted: Yet at the same time consider, that whilst thou art diligently employed in performing the important commands of thy Lord, thou art obliged to fulfil all righteousness; and not to neglect the most minute parts of thy duty, but let thy obedience be fervent, constant and universal.

